THOUGHTS ON THE LIFE HEREAFTER

OR

THE MANY MANSIONS IN OUR FATHER'S HOUSE

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LIFE HEREAFTER.

"'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man."—ADDISON.

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"RECEIVE me, Zion, city blest,
City of David's tranquil rest;
Thy glorious light shines ever clear,—
Thy gates, the cross to us so dear,
Thy ramparts, are of living stone
Round our rejoicing Monarch's throne.

"Thy light shall never pass away,
Nor thy spring fade, thy peace decay;
Sweet odours all thy heavens shall fill,
Thy feasts no care shall ever chill;
No grief thy holy joy can taint,
No sorrowing want, no sad complaint;
There none are mean, none are deformed,
All to Christ's likeness are conformed.

"O heavenly city, home thrice blest,
Upon the Rock thou art at rest;
Thy gates thrown open wide to all,
To thee from far I longing call,
To thee my eager wishes turn,
For thee my loving heart doth burn!

. . . . .

Our *home*, where will the grateful throng,
For ever bursting into song,
Where Moses and Elias meet,
Glad hallelujahs we repeat!"

Imitated from Hildebert, Bishop of Mens.

PREFACE.

—o—

THESE Thoughts are like the work of the little creature that frames to itself a shelter by piecing together tiny fragments of sand and shells into a kind of irregular mosaic. For wherever I could use the words of others I have done so, feeling strongly the force of the Chinese proverb, "Man's words are as an arrow, straight to the mark; woman's are as a broken fan:" they start, indeed, from the heart, the true starting-point, but they are very apt to lead in a different direction from that intended. Such as they are, however, I

have written them out, in the hope that some more qualified person may be inclined to take them up and write something better worth, thereby doing real service to God, and conferring on his fellow men a blessing, the full value of which could hardly be estimated.

L——.

I.

ZECHARIAH VIII. 4, 5.

In Memoriam. A. C.——C. S. L.

"Know ye the land? 'tis not an earthly home,
To which no thoughts of sorrow ever come."

It is not possible even to tell over the "infinite meanings that cluster round the word home," rooted as they are in the very depth of our holiest affections. "The joys that crowd the household nook,"—the certainty of sympathy that brings us

Home, home to sigh when we're sad!
Home, home to smile when we're glad!

the unconquerable feeling for our fatherland, the young conscript's deep sadness, the exile's unutterable yearning,

> The strength whereby
> The patriot girds himself to die,—

these all have "one fountain, deep and clear," in that love of home and country which is indeed one of the truest holiest feelings of man's heart. And how intensely He felt this love, who took our nature upon Him, that He might show what it ought to be in perfection as He the second Adam might make it, His own words, His tears, have taught us!

And when He came near, He beheld the city, and wept over it. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day the things that belong unto thy peace." Even thou,—thou that killest the prophets, thou that wilt say, "This is the

Heir: come, let us kill Him, that the inheritance may be ours,"—even thou art so dear to Him still, that His farewell command to His disciples is, "Go, preach the Gospel to all nations, *beginning at Jerusalem.*"

But here we have no continuing city. We seek one to come. I am a stranger and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. Day by day we learn more and more clearly, that this is not our home. Would God we all learned at the same time to look on to that blessed place (of which our earthly home should be as the type and shadow), where these heartfelt affections shall receive their fullest development. For as Moses was commanded to make all things according to the pattern shown him on the mount, so the whole life of a Christian and of his household should be after the pattern of the "faultless charities" above; and those who have never known the blessings of a home in the

true sense of the word, whose home comfort is spoiled by jarring tempers or ungoverned wills,—those, also, who like their Master, are homeless on earth, not having where to lay their head,—may all look in joyful hope to the time when He who gives them their inheritance and is Himself gone "to prepare a place for them," shall bid them welcome to His Father's house,—His Father and their Father: "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Who will long most eagerly for this their real home? Those who from happy memories and peaceful enjoyments may frame to themselves some faint, dim outline of that exceeding and eternal weight of glory, the happiness of heaven? or those whose longing is enhanced by the contrast between the bliss they are promised, and the sorrows or the sufferings of their life here?

Surely we might expect that the happy,

the glad hearts, the thankful ones, who are enjoying all their Father's gifts to the utmost —youth and health and beauty,—surely they will be most eager for their home, most joyous in their anticipations, most happy in speaking to one another of the time when they shall go home. But do we find it so?

"Mother, dear, I'm counting the days and the hours and the minutes till I come home." Where is the feeling that corresponds to this? In the early days of the Christian Church the Thessalonian converts were so absorbed by their hopes of the immediate coming of our Lord as to call for a warning from St. Paul; and "Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus," was constantly on the lips of the primitive Christians. But with us, what do we feel? I do not ask, what do we believe, or what do we think, but what do we instinctively *feel?* Instead of dwelling with a frank, child-like hopefulness on the many

proofs of our Father's love that meet us here, as gifts sent to teach us what we may expect hereafter, do we not rather silence all thought on the subject, as if with a dim misgiving that we had better avoid it?

Would this satisfy us from our own children? We prepare for their home-coming, we look forward to their holidays, would it not pain us unspeakably to know that they shrink from thinking of their home? And it is not a sufficient answer to say that the carnal heart is enmity against God, for not only those who are living without God in the world, but those who know what Jesus wrought, who do serve Him, and do love Him and His, too often share the same reluctant feeling. Why, why is it so?

Partly, for that in mercy to us God has implanted in us a strong desire of life, and an equally strong instinctive dread of death.

Partly, because when God looked on the world He made, He beheld it was very good; and even now, stained and spoiled by sin as it is,—

> Still His bounties gild the span
> Of ruined earth and sinful man.

Still He "takes pleasure in the prosperity of His servant." All things are our's; all things shall work together for good to them that love Him, for "He made every man to be happy—be sure;" though we are so prone to look only on that which is close at hand, that the joys which we should accept from our Father's love, as His gifts lent to show what better things He has in store for us, become "the things that make death terrible." We delight in them till we fear to lose them, and thus, "unfaithful in that which is His," who shall give us that which is our own,—that kingdom which we are to inherit, pre-

pared for us from the foundation of the world?

In Mr. Trench's most interesting account of the realities of Irish life, there is a short sketch of the rise of what, for want of a better word, may be called the Revival movement. There is no need to enter here into any inquiry as to the doctrine taught by Revivalists; the point that concerns us to note, is the power obtained by their vivid realization of the agony and terror of the condemned. But, stern as our Lord's words are whenever stern denunciation was needed, unflinching as was the teaching of the Apostles, this was not the course they followed: "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we *persuade* men," says St. Paul. Doubtless they felt, as has been well said by Sir Thomas Browne, "With joy, I mention it, I was never afraid of hell: I have so fixed my contemplation on heaven, that I have almost forgot the idea of hell,

and am afraid rather to lose the joys of the one than endure the misery of the other. I fear God, yet am not afraid of Him. His mercies make me ashamed of my sins, before His judgments afraid thereof. I can hardly think there was ever any scared into heaven. They go the fairest way to heaven that would serve God without a hell."

But if the terrors of hell have so strong an influence, what might not be the power of those who should tell of the glory and the beauty of the city of God,—that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? For, indeed, something of our reluctance to think of the life hereafter must be laid to the score of mistaken teaching; and if it make our hearts burn within us to perceive that He of whose self-sacrifice we ought hardly to be able ever to think without grateful tears,—that He is waiting to be gracious to us, and we wait to be driven to

Him by sorrow, by sickness, or by fear, must we not long, if by any means we may, to help our friends and ourselves—

> To view the Canaan that we love
> With unbeclouded eyes.

If we may but help to substitute a brighter, and as we believe, a truer conception of the life to come, for those views which as Archbishop Whateley has said, "are rendered more uninteresting to our feelings, and consequently more uninviting than there is any need to make them," must we not long the more to do this because these mistakes are chiefly made by those whose zeal for God's service is so earnest that they would be deeply grieved if they knew themselves to be hindering instead of helping forward the children of His kingdom?

Rest and praise,—songs of praise,—these are the two thoughts dwelt on almost exclu-

sively, till the sense produced in us is of stillness and sameness, of a vague monotony. Is it wonderful that the light-hearted girl,

> In all the glow of innocent delight,
> The ball-room's newest, brightest star to-night,

or the bold, active, spirited lad, "rejoicing in his youth," as King Solomon bids him,—is it wonderful that these and such as these should put off the thoughts of heaven to a graver age, a darker day, if this is all we tell them? In what does it materially differ from the simple notion of the good old French peasant: "Je m'y pense qu'il y aura des chaises rangées le long du ciel, et nous serons assis là et nous chanterons des Pseaumes toute l'eternité."

But our Lord's words are, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." And surely "it is a frivolous notion that the vast and intricate machinery of the universe, and the

profound scheme of God's government, are now soon to reach a resting-place, where nothing more shall remain to active spirits throughout an eternity, but recollections of labour and anthems of praise. No idea can do more violence to the principles on which we reason, than this does."* "Nothing which we at present see would lead us to the thought of a solitary, inactive state hereafter; but if we judge at all from the analogy of nature, we must suppose, according to the Scripture account of it, that it will be a community." †

And this community is joyful in the perfection of its organization; for our place in it we are forged in the trials below, wherein we learn our weaknesses, our strength, our virtue, and our flaws. Thus perfected in Him, in whom the whole building groweth into an holy temple in the Lord, we fall each into

* Taylor's "Physical Theory of Another Life."

† Bishop Butler's Analogy. Part i., ch. 5, par. 4.

his own place,—like the fair stones of that temple built by King Solomon, of which St. Paul is here describing the Antitype; we fall into the place prepared by the Master for us, for which we shall know we are fitted, and in which we shall rejoice without envy or murmur.

For what is heavenly rest? Power to do the will of God without weariness. "Obedience shall there be as pleasant and easy as the state of them that live there shall be glorious and happy, and this shall all have unto eternity, and shall be sure to have it so, and therefore the blessedness of this peace, or the peace of this blessedness, shall be the fulness and perfection of all goodness."*

There, day and night, Thy happy saints
In ceaseless work find rest unending;
Where, in Thy strength their's never faints,
Where tears are dried, and hushed complaints,
All in one worship bending.

* St. Augustine's "City of God," bk. xix., c. 27.

So that the rest of heaven "will be as full of life as the glad rest of a midsummer noon." The praises of heaven will be as varied as the thoughts of the heart that speak them, as the circumstances that call them forth.

We are too apt to forget that, as the Holy Spirit has taught us, "words do sometimes darken counsel." Rest to the careworn, conscience-stricken man, who has learnt to know not only his sins but his sinfulness, who has learnt the fearful truth that our's is a sinful nature,—rest to him is a blessed thought, a word of comfort unspeakable; but to the young, in whom the sweet elastic sense of joy is yet so strong that care is hardly known by them, to whom, "by God's merciful arrangement, even sin is not that crushing thing which it sometimes becomes in late years," to them rest means only inaction.

Therefore, while *we* dwell on the blessings of rest, let us be careful to leave them the

joyful hope that they shall indeed be as the angels of God, as those "flying pursuivants" who—

> For us fight: they watch and duly ward,
> And their bright squadrons round about us plant,
> And all for love, and nothing for reward:
> Oh, why should heavenly God to man have such regard?

II.

"So all in triumph to His palace went,
Whose work in narrow words may not be pent,
For boundless thought is less than is that glorious tent.
There sweet delights shall know no end nor measure.
No chance is there, nor dating times succeeding;
No wasteful spending can impair their treasure:
Pleasure, full grown, yet ever freshly breeding,
Fulness of sweets excludes not more receiving,
The soul still big with joy,—yet still conceiving;
Beyond slow tongue's report, beyond quick thought's perceiving."

PHINEAS FLETCHER.

"EYE hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." (1 Cor. ii. 9.) "Since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him." (Isaiah lxiv. 4.)

St. Paul is contrasting the ignorance of the princes of this world with the knowledge which God reveals to us by His holy Spirit, and uses the verse from the prophet Isaiah to enforce his own words. The whole passage is often dwelt on to show the necessity of a change of heart; for that none but the pure in heart can see God, is one of the cardinal truths that must be paramount in our faith. But in these texts, as in all the Holy Spirit's teaching, the truth is one, as the light is one, but manifold as the rays that make that light, —may we not believe that besides this great truth, the Prophet and the Apostle meant to lift up our hearts in devout thankfulness to that God whose infinite perfection is so far above our finite powers of comprehension that, not the utmost stretch of man's noblest faculties, not the utmost straining of man's most exalted imagination since the beginning of the world ever can enable us to conceive

of Him as He is, or of the heaven of His glory.

But it is a beautiful and a very encouraging thought, that as to Moses hid in the cleft of the rock He vouchsafed to reveal some part of that glory, so to those who are sheltering beneath the Rock of Ages He will manifest Himself still: "If any man love Me, my Father will love Him, and we will come unto him." And it seems to me that the words of the two texts mentioned above, if taken with their context, will help us to a glimpse of part of our happiness hereafter.

"Thou meetest those that *remember* thee in thy ways." If, with the perfection of our glorified nature, memory is also perfect, how shall we rejoice when we remember God's ways, when He vouchsafes to meet us, Himself His own interpreter; and all that seemed dark in His decrees is made plain, when they are revealed to us by the Spirit, "for the Spirit

searcheth all things, even the deep things of God."

> Fail not and falter not; the pathway lies
> Only through sorrow to the sinless skies!
> Then, when the riddle of the world is read,
> And hate, and pain, and time, and toil are dead,—
> Then shall ye learn the lesson of the years,
> And wear the coronal endurance wears.

Then will not every feeling of the heart be wakened to respond to the infinite love and mercy that will then be made known to us? will not every power of the mind be roused to its utmost energy in the endeavour to comprehend the wonderful works of God in creation, and above all in redemption? Even here, "deep calleth unto deep," the heavens declare the glory of God: how much more *there*, when we shall indeed praise Him in His noble acts, according to His excellent greatness, when He Himself will meet him that rejoiceth, "Those that remember Thee in Thy ways!"

"So much of our early gladness vanishes utterly from our memory; doubtless, that joy is wrought up into our nature, as the sunlight of long past mornings is wrought up in the soft mellowness of the apricot, but it is gone for ever from our imagination;" yet may we not believe that in the life hereafter, what Jeffreys Taylor calls a "plenary memory" will return, and again everything will seem

> Apparelled in celestial light,
> The glory, and the freshness of a dream.

That dream will be a blessed reality; the freshness of our youth will return, the vividness of our first impressions, before the glory passed away from the earth; and again, "love and nearness seeming one," we shall indeed receive the kingdom of heaven as little children, to whom the world breathes only love and joy.

I know that some will shrink from this

thought, because they say that a plenary memory must bring with it thoughts of grief, as well as thoughts of gladness, and these say, "Why dwell on these lesser matters? We know that God will make us perfectly happy: let us leave all to Him."

It is well; and yet, to those of us whose hearts swell to think of our Saviour and our God *preparing*, as we are so repeatedly told He has done, and is doing, it is not enough. Nay, were we told of an earthly friend preparing a warm welcome, a continuance of thoughtfully contrived enjoyments, all to give pleasure to the expected one, should we not think it an unsympathising heart that could satisfy itself with anticipations so cool as these? And surely the trust in God's love which they rely on for the whole of their thoughts of heavenly joy, we may safely claim for a part of our's. God Himself will wipe all tears from all faces. Our unrighteous-

ness is forgiven, our sin is covered, hidden even from our own shame; and if we do remember it, may we not believe with Martin Luther, that the remembrance will only enhance the glow of gratitude to Him who died for us while we were yet sinners?

The only grief we cannot face is the thought that hereafter there will be some who must be shut out into outer darkness; but that He who spared not His own Son, who freely gave Him to suffer for our sakes, will have left no means untried to save those whom He loves better than we do, we may be quite certain. And while there is life there is hope. God willeth not the death of a sinner. Our prayers and tears may earn for fallen souls

> Some healing breath,
> Ere they have died the apostate's death.

And for those who are gone, let us remember that He alone

Who made the heart,
  Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord, its separate tone,
  Each spring, its several bias.

Infinite in justice, infinite in compassion, let us fall down before Him and say, "Doubtless Thou art our Father. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" *

"Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Even in this life it is remarkable how much more abiding are our memories of joy than of pain; how, verily we remember no more the anguish for joy. In one of Miss Martineau's essays there is a most interesting passage, describing, after a night of severe suffering and distress, the wandering from the dim room, which seemed full of pain, to the passage window, and watching the fresh beauty of the sunrise.

* See Vaughan's Sermons on the Light of the world, p. 143.

The memory of that sunrise was indeed "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever," while the night of pain was forgotten, as if it had never been.

> When the shore is won at last,
> Who will count the billows past?

Our Lord is gone to prepare a place for us; and the words that immediately follow, tell of that which will be our highest happiness: "I will receive you; I will receive you to myself." "We shall not think of the crown, but of the hand that holds it out to us;" that hand where we may still see the print of the nails with which He was wounded in the house of His friends, for us men and for our transgressions. That will be, that must be our first thought. Think of the glow of glad enthusiasm with which we hear or read of noble deeds, of manly courage, of patient fortitude, of loving self-sacrifice. Then think

"of the rapture of kneeling at the feet of One whom we can utterly love and utterly adore,"—one in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,—perfect God, yet perfect man; so that we may draw nigh to Him and find a Friend, yea, more than a friend, a Brother beloved. And He is gone to prepare a place for us. He will come again, and receive us to Himself. "Where I am, there shall ye also be."

Is not that very word "prepare," in itself a proof that all our powers, were they ten-fold, a thousand-fold what they are, would find scope for their full exercise in heaven? Does not our Lord's own teaching show that the glory of heaven will be indeed a unity, but it will be what Pascal calls unity in multiplicity!

"I will give to this last, even as unto thee." The wedding garment is alike for all, the gift of God is eternal life to all. But he

that is faithful with the two talents intrusted to him, shall rule over two cities: he that is faithful with ten talents, shall rule over ten. One star differeth from another star in glory. Do we not feel that it must be so,—that we are thankful, most thankful for the wedding garment, but that it is not for us to "attain to the first three,"—the glorious company of the Apostles, the goodly followship of the Prophets, the noble army of Martyrs? Yet will it not be joy unspeakable to be admitted among them,—to learn from them what they can teach, and feel that we, too, are of them, serving in the same host, under the same Captain.

Anch'io son pittore: I, too, am a painter. It is beautifully explained in one of the Rev. F. W. Robertson's sermons, that this spirit of reverent thankfulness for our own possession, in some degree, of powers we see exercised in far higher glory by our superiors, is one which

we may and do share, when we think how Jesus Christ, the second Adam, took our nature upon Him, that He might fulfil all righteousness, and show what we should have been but for sin. What we yet may be; for if we are counted worthy to obtain the inheritance and be with the saints, sharing that light which has no need of the sun or of the moon, we all with open face beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory. May we not believe that there will be spiritual *growth* in heaven? Who does not know what it is at moments to wish that we had been with our Lord in the days of His life on earth, that we had sat by the Lake of Genesareth, or on the Mount of Olives, and listened to His teaching? There (in heaven) the Lord Himself will be with us, and for ever.

And His faithful followers and servants, Noah, Daniel, Job, David the king, Isaiah

the prophet, the generous Joseph, the chivalrous Jonathan, Stephen the martyr, the beloved Disciple, the gentle Barnabas, the warmhearted Peter, the noble heroic Paul,—think of mingling with men like these as friends! And those who shall come from the east and from the west,—men who like Socrates, sought with their whole heart for the truth, who like Aristides, were indeed a law unto themselves,—think what it will be to share with them the clearer light that has been granted to us; for

> What delights can equal those
> That stir the spirit's inmost deeps,
> When one that loves but knows not, reaps
> A truth from one that loves and knows?

Ah! and others, humbler ones than these, there shall be, for they

> Whose hearts are fresh and simple,
> Who have faith in God and nature,
> They believe that in all ages
> Every human heart is human;

That in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings
For the good they comprehend not,
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness,
And are lifted up and strengthened.

Think how we shall rejoice in the joy of such as these! Think of the extreme enjoyment we feel here on earth, in meeting with those who share in our pursuits and sympathize with our tastes, who are like-minded with us! Then think what it will be to meet in heaven, where the sympathy will be complete; where not only our companions, but ourselves, will be made perfect; where neither envy, nor jealousy, nor insincerity, nor anything that is evil can enter; where the saints shall spend in love the eternal day. Something like this seems involved in the constant mention of the city,—the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. The idea of a city implies

the citizenship of the inhabitants, the fellowship of those who are bound together by many ties. It is so even on earth, how much more in that city whose builder and maker is God.

If here on earth we may consider one another, "to provoke unto love and to good works," how much more *there*, where we are changed into the image of our Lord, reflecting as in a glass that glorious image, once marred by sin, and now renewed in its first brightness; and not only reflected by us, but reflected upon us from all around us, for the Lord God giveth them light, and by that light the righteous do shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father.

III.

"Thy saints are crowned with glory great,
They see God face to face;
They triumph still, they still rejoice,—
Most happy is their case.

"For there they live in such delight,
Such pleasure and such play,
As that to them a thousand years
Do seem as yesterday.

"Thy gardens and Thy gallant walks
Continually are green;
There grow such sweet and pleasant flowers
As nowhere else are seen."

J. B. P.

From Sir R. Palmer's Book of Praise.

HERE on earth we dwell like spirits imprisoned. We carry about with us the body of this death. "We can cause the gratings of our prisons to touch," but only in rare and precious moments do we meet heart to heart and mind

to mind, as Dante describes himself in paradise, led by the earnest gaze of Beatrice, and following her upward look, though no word had passed between them.

May we not believe that the communion of saints in heaven will be something far more perfect and more complete than we can imagine here on earth. "Let us consider the words Communion and Atonement. Communion, the uniting of many into one body; atonement, the reconciling or making *at one* of those who were before estranged." Let us consider of them in the light of that sentence of our Lord's intercessory prayer on that last night, just before He, our great High Priest, laid down His life for us: "I pray that they may be one, even as We are One." As the spirit of man unites the soul or life to the body, so the Holy Spirit unites the Church (which is Christ's body) to Him who is her life. And in that glorious description of the

Church given by St. Paul to the Ephesians (ch. iv. 4—16), we see that this unity of the faith leaves the fullest liberty, the most free play (if we may so express it), to the effectual working of every part; a liberty, however, "which none can enjoy outwardly but He who has it in Himself, which consists in the orderly, harmonious, unchecked movement of the heart and mind in the path marked out for them by God," * for

> We live by law; not like the fool,
> But like the bird who freely sings
> In strictest bonds of rhyme and rule,
> And finds in them not bonds, but wings.

And we return again to the words of Pascal, that the unity of heaven is unity in multiplicity; unity, not uniformity, in this heavenly community. He who knows and loves us all,

* Archdeacon Hare.

—who knows us, each one individually, as the good shepherd knows each sheep of his flock,—He is gone "to prepare a place" for us.

There is one touchingly beautiful thought connected with this name, which our Lord is pleased to give Himself. Few animals are so much alike to an ordinary observer as sheep. None but a practised eye could ever perceive, much less remember the little matters that mark the difference between sheep and sheep. Yet this our Lord does: "I know my sheep," He says. And elsewhere He tells us that the very hairs of our head are numbered; so that we may confidently expect that the *home* He prepares for each of us will be such a home as will satisfy every craving of our nobler nature, now redeemed, renewed, created afresh. He knows each, and in His Father's house are dwellings and occupations for each. "The streets of the city are full of boys and

girls, playing in the streets thereof." The joyousness of happy childhood, the bright eagerness of youth, the exultation of manhood, the glorious thoughtfulness of maturer age, the calm serenity of old age,—each, if only they be found in the way that leadeth unto life, will find a place prepared.

For the poet, the philosopher, the painter, the naturalist, the historian,—for the loving philanthropist,—for the ardent patriot,—for the brave warrior,—for the gentle, patient woman,—for the humble ones, whose whole knowledge was the love of God and of their neighbour,—for the hard-working ones, whose life was spent in doing their day's work "as unto the Lord,"—for all these He prepares. For are we not to love the Lord, and to serve Him with all our heart, and with all our mind, and with all our soul, and with all our strength? The whole being, the whole man—body, soul, and spirit,—must be His, His

wholly, and His for ever. "He made us for Himself," says St. Augustine, "and with Him alone can our restless hearts find rest." With Him! The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them. The holy city is prepared, "as a bride adorned for her husband;" and though the description of the city that lieth four-square belongs in the first place to the Church triumphant,—as is represented by the mystical perfect number twelve, recalling the twelve tribes of Judah, and pointing to the true Israel, for whom the temple and the altar are measured,—yet if we keep this before us as the main truth, we are not forbidden to let our fancy see in the four-square city with its pearly gates, that the architect's love of order and proportion will be glorified to the utmost. And the rainbow in sight, like an emerald, beside the blessed thoughts that it suggests (for in the Eastern Church, green is the symbol of the life of

grace),* does it not appeal to the painter's love of colour, which is more deeply rooted in our nature than has hitherto entered into the heart of man to conceive? The gold and pearls, the jasper and chalcedony,—may we not think that the mention made of them is to show that the variety of beauty, so delightful to us in God's lower world, will be as manifest in His heavenly kingdom?

"I was delighted, as I often have been at this season, to see the primroses under every hedge. It is pleasant to think that the Maker of these can make other flowers for the gardens of His other mansions."† These are the words of a writer who might well have been contented with thoughts of intellectual pleasures only, if any man ever might.

* In the Eastern Church, white was the symbol of truth; red, of love; green, of the life of grace; violet, of penitence.

† Carlyle's Life of Sterling.

The Mount Zion, "beautiful in situation, the joy of the whole earth." Surely they who delight in God's works here, to whom the mountain tops are a place of holiness, may please themselves with the thought that *there* they shall find yet more abounding beauty. "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together; instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree." "I will make with my people a covenant of peace, and will cause evil beasts to cease out of the land, and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. Those whose pleasure here is to watch the wonderful works of God in bird and beast, in plant and flower, may they not rejoice in the belief that hereafter, when the earth is no longer smitten with a curse, they shall see and know how everything He made "was very good"?

And the astronomer, whose brain reels in the attempt to complete his own calculations,

what will he feel, admitted to the presence of Him "who telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names"? Aye, much more than this,—King of kings, Lord of lords, he is, and was, and is for ever; yet

> When thou hast told those isles of light,
> And fancied all beyond,

know, O man, that their Lord,—He who made them all, who with one rough word could have swept away this world that seems to us so vast, yet is so little that it would hardly be missed from the hosts of heaven,—He

> Resigned them all, to earn
> The bliss of pardoning Thee.

Oh, if the saints do comprehend the breadth and length and depth and height, and know the love of Christ, then, indeed, must their love and joy and gratitude be more than has

ever entered into the heart of men to conceive!

And the geologist, who follows step by step God's providence in the preparation of this material world for man's habitation,—the historian, who watches "time's full river as it flows," seeking to trace out the same providence at work in training man for his heavenly inheritance,—the earnest, thoughtful student, who delights to dwell on God's finished work of redemption, which things the angels desire to look into,—surely all their longings for wisdom and knowledge will be more than satisfied in the home God has prepared for us, the new heaven and the new earth, where we shall know even as we are known.

IV.

"O God! O good beyond compare,
If thus Thy meaner works are fair,
If thus Thy bounties gild the span
Of ruined earth and sinful man,
How glorious must that mansion be
Where Thy redeemed shall dwell with Thee!"

BISHOP HEBER.

THE first heaven and the first earth are passed away. There shall be a new heaven and a new earth.

It has been suggested that St. John's vision of the multitude in white robes with palms in their hands, refers not to the palm branch borne as a sign of victory, but to the palms carried by the Israelites at the Feast of Tabernacles, of which the willow catkins of our English Palm Sunday still serve to re-

mind us; and there is a remarkable passage in the Book of the Leviticus, "If any of his kin come to redeem it," which points very naturally onward to Him who is so often spoken of as coming to redeem us.

"The Redeemer shall come to Zion," says Isaiah. Himself said, in eternity, "Lo, I come!" The shout, the hosanna shout, is yet to be raised when He comes again to redeem *earth itself*, and not its people only. Truly He is our Kinsman. Revelations v. 5 declares that not only has He already, by His blood, paid the price for our *persons*, as the Lamb slain, but has claimed the right to enter for us on possession of the inheritance. He took the seven-sealed book, thereby claiming to be heir of the property (compare Jer. xxxii. 8—11), and all heaven rejoiced. Already, then, in hope, we may anticipate our return to our lost earth.*

* Bonar, Commentary on Leviticus.

And what if earth
Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein
Each to other like, more than on earth is thought.*

"It is a beautiful thought that all earthly things are types of the heavenlies. Specimens of this sort of representation are presented to us with considerable copiousness in the Holy Scriptures, where ideas of heavenly and unseen things are reflected, as it were, from the familiar objects around us. And this is the only way in which they could be communicable, without a direct and miraculous change in the constitution of our minds. It is true that as yet we get but occasional glimpses of these revelations. It is only now and then that a homely object becomes a picture of something higher, a transparency lighted up in every feature, by the glory behind it." †

"O God, mercifully grant that we which

* "Paradise Lost," Book V. † Gosse's "Aquarium."

know Thee now by faith, may, after this life, have the fruition of Thy glorious Godhead." So our Church teaches us to pray on the feast of the Epiphany, but only in a degree can we understand what these words mean. Thank God, we have a similitude, which He Himself vouchsafes to use, when He calls Himself the Sun of Righteousness, the Light of the world, the bright and morning Star. Without light there is no joy, no colour, no brightness, without heat there is no life, no comfort, yet the blank that our physical existence would be without light and heat, is but a shadow of the blank that our moral and spiritual life would be apart from God, the Father, the Saviour, and the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life.

There is a wild legend in Cornwall, of one Jannie Tregagle, who was doomed to empty the largest pool on Bodmin moor, with a pierced limpet shell; and when the winds howl over the open moor, the Cornish peasant hears the

voice of Jannie Tregagle wailing over the hopelessness of his task. It would be just as hopelessly impossible to bring out the full beauty, the unfathomable depth of meaning which these words, "I am the Light of the world," convey. Our imagination falls before the thought of the King in His beauty, as our eyes, unshaded, must close before the glory of the noonday sun. Indeed, it was partly because we *could* not behold Him in the effulgence of His glorious majesty, that He vouchsafed to become incarnate, full of grace and truth. And it seems to me that the force of the similitude is enhanced by the way in which darkness (outer darkness) is spoken of as the punishment of those who *will not* come to the light,—who, as has been strikingly pointed out in a series of sermons on Holman Hunt's wonderful picture,* do

* Sermons on the Light of the world, by the Rev. W. Glover.

bolt and bar out the light that God has commanded to shine in our dark hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. And I have often thought, moreover, that the instinctive horror most children have of "the dark," ought to be very carefully and very tenderly treated, for darkness and the power of darkness are spoken of all through the Bible as something far more fearful than the mere negation of light.

Canst thou, by searching, find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is higher than heaven: what canst thou do? Deeper than hell: what canst thou know? Though we should "stand still and consider the wondrous works of God" for our whole lifetime, we should find at the end, that we were still but on the limits of the boundless sea of knowledge. "To know even as man may know, any one branch of natural

science thoroughly, is now work enough for man's allotted time on earth." So we learn from "Glaucus," that beautiful sketch of part of God's wonders in the great and wide sea. The heart of man seems to faint within him at the thought of those myriad worlds revealed to us by the telescopes of modern invention. Like the Queen of Sheba, "there is no more spirit in us" when we strive to master the equally overpowering marvels of microscopic discovery.

"These emmets, how little they are in our eyes!" Emmets? The powers of an ordinarily good microscope will show forms of the most exquisite beauty, which, compared with an emmet, bear the same proportion that the little mouse does to the lordly elephant. And so many and so various are these invisible witnesses of God's bounty, that "we who have but span-long lives," must fall "upon this great world's altar-stairs," and humbly own

that even here—here, in this fallen world—it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive half the things God has prepared for those that love Him. The limit of our knowledge lies not in that which is to be known, but in our own feeble finite powers.

There is a little book, abridged and translated in 1794, from a French essay, "Sur la Felicité de la vie à Venir," par C. L. de Villette, in the introduction to which the writer says that his object is "to prove that the knowledge we have of the nature of the universe and of the ways of God as revealed to us in the Gospel, may furnish us with strong reasons for being persuaded that we shall possess in heaven our present faculties, and enjoy many of our present pleasures, though refined and improved beyond human conception." Further on, he says that in many respects our knowledge here below far exceeds what is necessary to direct us in pro-

viding for our natural wants, so that if the Creator had limited our duration to the short space of human life, it would be impossible to comprehend with what design He could have given to man a capacity which extends to innumerable speculations, not requisite for the supply of our necessities; and this is of itself a strong proof that the present state is only the beginning, the infancy of our existence.

M. de Villette makes exactly the same assertion as the author of "Glaucus:" that "thousands of years of such a life as ours, would not suffice to glance slightly over the ten thousandth part of God's works in creation;" and he continues, that "as we see even in this world, there are sensations of which some individuals are entirely ignorant, it is not unreasonable to suppose that our glorified bodies may be endued with new modes of perception," adding that "by attempting en-

tirely to spiritualize our celestial existence, we reduce ourselves to the impossibility of forming the least idea of it; and so, while we acknowledge a resurrection of the body, we in fact deny it; and that to this cause, perhaps, among others, is owing the coldness and indifference with which even the best people too often regard the joys of heaven."

Is there not in Keble's beautiful paraphrase on Isaiah xxxiii. 17, something of a similar feeling,—that the very imperfection of our powers here, the unsatisfied yearnings for an ideal beauty, point on to that time that shall come, when, "in fearless love and hope uncloyed," we shall lose ourselves in the ocean of God's love? Again we return to the root of the whole matter: "Love is life's only sign." "I am the life eternal." The life eternal is to *know* God, and God is love. For if it were only that the architect's delight in the harmony of proportion, the painter's deep

feeling of the loveliness of colours, or the poet's joy in all that is beautiful, would be intensified and enhanced, but still essentially the same, then, as Keble says, the heaven we idly dream would be but

> Poor fragments all of this low earth,
> Such as in sleep would scarcely soothe
> A soul that once had tasted of immortal truth.

But we shall all be changed, as St. Paul assures us,—changed from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord. All our gifts, all real science, all true philosophy, all the grace of art, all the beauty of poetry, are lights reflected from Him who is the Father of light; and as in the natural world, wherever we see the sunlight fall, no matter what may be the opening through which it shines, the spot of light is an image of the source of light, a circle or an oval representing the form of the sun, either exactly, or as seen in

perspective,*—so in the moral world all our arts and sciences ought to be as the openings through which we see God's truth shine; and I have sometimes thought of that mysterious connection of the sciences, which makes it impossible to follow up one without entering in some degree on others, and fancied I could see in the blessing on the faithful servants, "thou which hast been faithful in a very little, be thou over ten cities; thou who wast also faithful, though with feebler powers, be thou over five cities," that those who cultivate to the best of their means their talents, be they what they may, will receive hereafter powers as far above what they now possess, as the five cites were above the five pounds of the parable. And in the preface to Max Müller's "Chips," there is a passage from St. Clement, which goes, I think, to support the

* See Ruskin's "Art of Drawing."

fancy. "It is clear," he says, "that the same God to whom we owe the Old and New Testaments, gave also to the Greeks their Greek philosophy, by which the Almighty is glorified among the Greeks." And a few lines before he had said, that "God is the cause of all that is good, only of some good gifts He is the primary, of others the secondary cause."

Surely, therefore, those who use the talents given to them in tracing out here God's wisdom, power, and love,

> In sea and sky, in stream or grove,

or in the far more difficult task of studying God's dealings with man, and man's true place in the world, may well venture to allow themselves the hope that what is so delightful to them here, will be yet more so in God's kingdom in heaven. There we know that we shall rise again with our bodies, but that we

shall be changed into the likeness of His most glorious body, every faculty freed from sin, from the body of this death, entering into His courts with thanksgiving, and into His gates with praise. It seems to me that we may venture to think thus, because the Bible speaks of progress, of change, from glory to glory. We know that our glorified bodies will have received their highest perfection when we wake up in His likeness. We know that the soul, the moral nature, is washed in the blood of the Lamb, restored to the image and likeness of God. That, too, must be perfect. Therefore it seems that this progress must be in the mind.

It has been objected against this, that knowledge shall vanish away, but love never faileth. But it seems to me, that as hereafter our minds can only be exercised on the wondrous works, or on the yet more wonderful attributes of God, every thought, every effort of the

mind, will but reveal to us fresh proofs of His goodness and mercy, of His unutterable glory, and His incomprehensible beauty. So that knowledge will indeed vanish away, but only because knowledge becomes itself love. For it *cannot* enter into the heart of man here to conceive what will be the ineffable bliss of feeling our whole being clinging to God in love, our whole heart and soul and spirit at one with His for ever; when every pulse is quickened, every feeling animated by perfect sympathy, complete communion with all around us. "The Lord their God is with them, the shout of a King is among them."

Something of this strange mysterious thrill, some faint, feeble semblance of that sympathy, many of us feel at the sound of a heartfelt British cheer; and yet more strongly when the responses of our beautiful Church Service, are taken up (as now and then, under strong excitement, they are) with one mind and one

mouth, as the voice of many waters. I know it may be said that these thoughts of heaven are too material, that all the passages I have mentioned are figurative; and I am willing, most willing to admit this. The eye, unshaded, cannot gaze upon the sun, nor are we able to conceive of the glories of heaven, except through a glass, darkly. All I want to plead for is that the one idea of rest should not be insisted on solely, till it becomes to the young a weary thought, from which they shrink, though with a feeling of shame at what seems so like ingratitude.

If the Bible says of the redeemed, that they have entered into rest, it says also, that they rest not day nor night. "Changed, indeed, we must be, ere it can be to us a thought of joy that there shall be no night there." But we must not try to balance one passage against another, we must believe both. In this, as in many other apparently

contradictory passages, "the Holy Spirit has been pleased so to state it, and so to leave it;" and faith does not inquire, but feels it is best so. The weary may think of rest, and be thankful; the young and ardent may think of activity, and rejoice. Moreover, those who have the advantage of being able to understand the original language of the New Testament, know that the rest spoken of by St. Paul, into which we enter, as God did into His, means not simply a rest, but the keeping of a glorious triumphant Sabbath festival; and that when St. John says they rest not day or night, he means, they cease not. They circle God's throne, rejoicing as the angels, day without night, serving God with a perfect, holy, willing service, which is itself rest.

V.

"I smiled to think God's greatness flowed around our incompleteness,—
Round our restlessness, His rest."

MRS. BROWNING.
Rhyme of the Duchess May.

IT is for the young,—for those who may be called away early, that I long most to speak. Young, strong, eager, they do not think of death; at their age, it is hardly to be wished that they should. Let *them* think of life,—of living to the honour and glory of God. But I do wish them to think of heaven with joy and gladness, not with the half stifled thought that I know is often their's:—

I am content to die: but oh, not now!

And if the thoughts I have suggested are

material, is not the idea of heaven usually presented to us—the white robe, the harp and crown,—quite as much so?

If one material idea may be admitted, we may not scruple at another; or if all be figurative, is it well to limit ourselves to the use of one figure only, till in some minds there arises that sense of monotony, of weariness, which we should most earnestly seek to avoid for ourselves and all for whom we care, as associated with the idea of their home even on earth, how much more, then, if associated with the thoughts of their home in heaven! Oh, I would rather, if better might not be, or *until* better might be, leave, as Martin Luther did to the little child, his belief that he should find in heaven the wished for white pony with golden trappings, than for one instant chill his heart with thoughts of a heaven that could be no heaven to him!

"I can just remember," says a theologian

of the last century, "when the women first taught me to say my prayers, I used to have the idea of a venerable old man, of a composed benign countenance, clad in a morning gown of flowered damask, sitting in an elbow chair." And he proceeds to say, that in looking back to these beginnings, he is "in no way disturbed by the grossness of his infant theology. The image thus shaped by the imagination of the child, was in truth merely one example of the various forms and conceptions fitted to divers states, and seasons, and orders, and degrees of the religious mind, whether infant or adult, which represent the several approximations such minds, or minds at such seasons, can respectively make to the completeness of faith. These imperfect ideas should be held to be reconciled and comprehended in that completeness, not rejected by it; and the nearest approximation which the greatest of human minds can accomplish, is

surely to be regarded as much nearer to the imperfection of an infantine notion, than to the fulness of truth. The gown of flowered damask and the elbow chair may disappear; the anthropomorphism of childhood may give place to the Divine incarnation of the Second Person, in after years; and we may come to conceive of the Deity as Milton did when his epithets were most abstract (so spake the Sovran Presence); but after all these are but different grades of imperfection in the form of doctrinal faith, and if there be a devouter love on the part of the child for what is pictured in his imagination as a venerable old man, than in the philosophic poet for the Sovran Presence, the child's faith has more of the efficacy of religious truth in it than the philosopher's." *

And if we study our Lord's teaching in

* H. Taylor. "Notes on Life."

humility and reverence, we shall find that He has dealt with us in loving condescension, much after this manner. All that we are told of the kingdom of heaven by Himself or in His written Word, is so sweet, so tender, so full of love! The wedding feast; the supper of the young heir; the description of the King's daughter, all glorious within, her clothing of wrought gold, and of the holy city as a bride adorned for her husband, so graciously alluding to the love of personal adornment inherent in our human nature; the pledge, "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I shall drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom;" the promise, "To him that overcometh will I give to sit upon my throne," which meets and (if I may so speak) sympathizes with the love of pre-eminence, so strongly felt by the noblest natures; all show how mercifully He speaks in language suited to our weakness, telling us

of earthly things that we may learn to believe of heavenly things, and may indeed see greater things than these.

I know there are some who will take exception at the thoughts of this condescension to our nature,—some who are so accustomed to dwell only on the excess of our natural inclinations, and on the stern necessity of repression, that they dare not think of making any allowance for these inclinations in themselves or in others. But I venture to think that they are confounding two things that ought to be carefully distinguished: the human nature, which God Himself gave us when He said, "Let us make man in our image;" and the carnal nature, into which we were moulded by Adam's transgression. The one is superinduced upon the other; and the two are so intermingled, that as St. Paul says, "there is ever a law in our members warring against the law of our mind." But

I do not think that anyone has ever *listened* to the voice of conscience, still less dwelt on the fearful truth that "sentiment will remain even when principle is destroyed," without perceiving that we *had* a noble nature once.

Most carefully our Church teaches us that we are very far gone from original righteousness, that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves; but nowhere does she assert that our first nature is utterly destroyed. It would be impossible for her to do so, deriving as she does her teaching from the Holy Scriptures, in the face of such a passage as 1 Cor. xi. 7: "Forasmuch as man *is* the image and glory of God."

It is dangerous (so Pascal has said) to dwell on man's ruined state, without making him comprehend at the same time his dignity; and, rightly considered, the thought will tend rather to humility than to pride. The beautiful vase you have shattered by your

carelessness, is no longer a thing of which you can be proud; you may gather up the fragments, you may preserve them for old remembrance sake, but the more precious was the original fabric, the more painfully you will regret its destruction.

Thank God that we may say, "We are the clay, and Thou our potter; forsake not Thou the work of Thine own hands." More earnestly still let us thank Him that He has said, "Thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thy help." There is a most beautiful sentence in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (ch. vi. 17), of which we miss the full force in our English version. The Apostle thanks God that those to whom he is writing, "have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to them. It should be, "*Into* which ye were delivered." The idea is that of molten metal poured into a mould, which assumes the shape of the mould as we

cast a die of any features; by God's grace the heart is softened to receive the impress, and the Holy Spirit moulds it anew in the image of its Maker.

Oh, would God that it might please Him to send His Holy Spirit into our hearts,

> Enabling, with perpetual light,
> The dulness of our blinded sight,

till each one of us shall follow Matthew Henry's advice: "Every Sabbath day think much of heaven. Have it in your mind, have it in your eye: *get ready for it!*" For "the first and noblest use of imagination is to enable us to bring sensibly to our sight the things that are recorded as belonging to our future state, or as invisibly surrounding us in this. It is given us that we may imagine the cloud of witnesses in heaven and earth, and see as if they were now present, the souls of the righteous waiting for us; that we may

conceive the great army of the inhabitants of heaven, and discover among them those whom we most desire to be with for ever." *

It may have been God's will that the outline of the joys of heaven which we gather from the Holy Scriptures should be but slight, in order to leave the fullest, the most unlimited scope to the imagination, which is, if rightly guided, one of the very noblest of man's powers. Or it may be that we are not intended to imagine what heaven will be, beyond that which is clearly revealed to us: that of Him and through Him and to Him are all things. And if we do present our bodies a living sacrifice, being transformed by the renewing of the mind, fulfilling the whole law by love, and "putting on the Lord Jesus Christ," we shall indeed learn of heaven while we enjoy all things here below; entering even

* Ruskin. "Modern Painters."

here on earth, upon that great Sabbath which hath no evening. For eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard the joys that God hath provided for those that love Him. All we really know is that we may allow the imagination its highest, noblest aspirations, and yet feel that this must utterly fall short of any conception of the heaven of God's glory, the kingdom of our inheritance. No eye hath seen, no painter's fancy can shadow out that city "of pure gold, as it were transparent glass." No ear hath heard, not the most gifted musician can imagine what those strains must be that

> Outring earth's drowsy chime,
> As heaven outshines the taper's light.

Poet, philosopher, thoughtful student, ardent inquirer,—all, all alike must confess that it *cannot* enter into the heart of man to conceive what it must be "to see the King in

His beauty." God Himself only can teach us, and God will. "Come: come ye blessed of my Father." But never, never let us turn from the thoughts of our home, because the joys our Father promises are greater than we can understand!

Our home, our Father's house, the inheritance He has given us, which He has so to speak *entailed* upon us! "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit." "A son inherits the title and property of his father not because he is virtuous and good, but because he is the son. The very phrase shows that there is in us no desert, no right, no merit." It is because He made us sons by His grace.

And our Lord Jesus Christ vouchsafes to call us His brethren. He is rejoicing in our hopes: "enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." "When thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." He, our Brother, is preparing

for us. He is thinking of us, getting ready for us. Shall we not think of Him? Shall we not think of the home He is preparing? Nay, rather, should not we be ready to think of Him every day, all day long, and say, "Thy kingdom come," as earnestly, as longingly as the child counts the days that shall bring him to an earthly home? No fear that this longing would unfit us for the work we have to do here, in this our place of training—our school. Those who cry with their whole full heart, "Thy kingdom come," are those who follow it up most earnestly with the prayer, "Thy will be done; as in heaven, so on earth. Even so, Come quickly, Lord Jesus."

VI.

"There is a heaven above,
Where sorrow is unknown,
A long eternity of love,
Framed for the good alone;
And faith beholds the dying here
Translated to that happy sphere.

"Thus star by star declines,
Till all have passed away,
As morning high and higher shines
To pure and perfect day;
Nor sink those stars in empty night,
They lose themselves in heaven's own light."

MONTGOMERY.

"'Tis sweet, as year by year we lose
Friends out of sight, in faith to muse
How grows in Paradise our store."

KEBLE.

I HAVE throughout taken for granted that which is to me a thought of joy unspeakable, —the meeting with our own dear friends, the recognition of them in heaven; for it seems

hardly possible to require anything more explicit on this subject than the simple words of the Apostle's Creed. If we unhesitatingly believe in the resurrection of the body, and in the communion of saints, our future recognition seems to follow as a matter of course.

Thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain; it may be of wheat, or of some other grain. God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him. To the golden wheat, to the waving barley, to the whispering oats, to the long grass of the field in its fresh cool beauty, to every seed his own body,—very different from the bare grain, but each distinguishable the one from the other; each recognized as the finished perfection of that bare grain that was sown. And shall it not be so with us? It is the almost universal feeling of all who have loved and lost, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

Love is indestructible:
Its holy flame for ever burneth;
From heaven it came, to heaven returneth.

Death has no change for love, for it is God's own gift,—His last, best gift to men; and not only His gift, but His command: "This commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also." * Also, "*So* as I have loved you, even so love ye one another." God gives us love, "something to love He lends us," and though oftentimes His loan is recalled, it is as a treasure laid up in heaven. Those that sleep in Jesus, He will bring with Him.

Only let it never be thought that the love we bear to our very dearest, *can* lessen our love to Jesus. Is the flame lessened that has kindled another lamp,—another, and yet another? Oh, no! It was a mistaken zeal that induced the pious old Scotswoman to say to

* Also, al-so: in like manner.

her husband on her death-bed, that she should be so taken up with the joy of beholding the Lamb of God, that for hundreds of years she should have no thought to spare for *him.* Is it not a happier and a more comprehensive feeling of God's infinite love, which is mentioned in Mrs. Grant, of Laggan's, "Letters from the Mountains," as prompting the Highlanders to send messages by the dying to those who are already gone on to the land which is very far off? May we not believe that each fresh love strengthens the old? The loving heart, like the bread blessed by our Lord, spends itself over and over again. Love,

> The sole bliss heaven could on all bestow,
> Which who but feels can taste, but think can know;
> Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
> As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake:
> The centre moved, a circle straight succeeds,
> Another still, and still another spreads.

Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace,
His country next, and next all human race;
Wide and more wide, the o'erflowings of the mind
Take every creature in of every kind:
Earth smiles around with boundless bounty blest,
And heaven beholds its image in his breast.

And in that relation which of all others our Lord has been pleased to sanctify, making the love of husband and wife the type of the union between Himself and His Church, does the young mother's joy in her first-born lessen her love for her husband? The last-born babe, whose place lies "deep in the mother's inmost heart," does its share lessen the love she bears to the rest? Does not the mother's heart find room for all, yet leaving paramount the true love of the loyal wife?

Oh, first in our hearts, in our thoughts, in our love, and our gratitude,—first immeasurably, beyond what words can tell, must He be who so loved us, He who died for us, who

bought us with such a fearful price, whose we are, not our own, but His for ever! Yet He who blessed the marriage feast at Cana, He whose heritage and gift the young children are, whose last earthly thought was for His mother, whose "own familiar friend" has told us that as God loves us we ought also to love one another,—He will Himself restore our beloved ones. He will bless and sanctify our love, so that in the hereafter the ardent affection, the true, loyal love of husband and wife will remain, none daring to put asunder that which God hath joined. But in this, as in everything else, there will be a change from glory to glory; from the glory of the earthly love, honoured by being the type of the union between Christ and His Church, to the full glory,—the perfect blessedness of those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The dearest, the holiest affection we know

on earth, has still a something of earth,—a something of selfishness adhering to it, from which we need a constant effort, an unceasing watchfulness, to free ourselves. "Ceux que j'aime le plus j'ai si mal aimé," is Madame de Gasparin's mournful complaint. But in heaven we shall be as the angels; and if while on earth we have striven to

> Hallow love, as knowing surely
> It returneth whence it came,

hereafter that love will "find its own immortal level in the charity of Christ." For there is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God; and the Tree of Life, the true Yggdrasil, grows on either side of the river, for in the words of St. John, we have "fellowship one with another, and our fellowship is with God, and with His Son Jesus Christ." "God pouring His grace and spirit upon us, we ascending as the dew drawn up

by the rays of the sun of righteousness in reciprocal love, finding in the bosom of the Father the peace and rest and joy that came first from Him."

And this complete union of believers in Christ is one of the strongest arguments in proof of our mutual recognition. We are united with our Lord Jesus Christ; and not with Him only, but with one another. "We are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints." "Do not fellow-citizens and members of the same household know each other? Why is the designation of strangers and foreigners repudiated, except that in heaven everyone will feel at home, knowing and loving everyone. A family, the members of which do not *know* each other, is a misuse of the word. To touch that mysterious parallel, which our Lord Himself gives us, does not the Father know the Son, and the Son the Father? Now

uniting with each other in them is to be of the same kind." * "For my part," Mr. Elliott goes on to say, "I go further still, for I find that the sinless Saviour had His natural tastes, which turned not wholly and entirely on piety, by virtue of which, I conceive, He loved St. John better than His other disciples; and as His humanity is the model of our's, I am inclined to believe that in the world to come there will still exist an innocent diversity of tastes, in consequence of which some will be more drawn to some than to others, and perhaps those who loved each other best in this world, will be permitted to exercise the same preference in the world where all will be high and holy, but not all equally high and holy."

"The highest joy," says Archbishop Whately, "will be the personal knowledge of our Divine

* Memoir of the Rev. H. V. Elliott.

and beloved Master. Yet we cannot but think that some part of the happiness of our future life will consist in an intimate knowledge of the greatest of His followers. And as we have seen those who have been loving playfellows in childhood grow up into still closer friendship in riper years, so it is probable that when this our state of childhood shall be perfected in the maturity of a better world, the like attachments will continue between those companions who have taken sweet counsel together, and walked in the House of God as friends. A change to indifference is as little to be expected as it is to be desired, and certainly it is not such a change as the Scriptures teach us to prepare for." *

It has always seemed to me a very beautiful foreshadowing of the love that is free from

* Commentary on Bacon.

all selfishness,—the true, deep love that overflows the heart, enlarging as it fills with Him who is the giver of life and love, which prompted Niehbuhr's second wife to unite with him in keeping as a kind of holy day, the wedding day of his first; for would it not be bitter pain to think that any other love could obliterate the love so precious to oneself? Would it not be more keenly painful still, to think that the love for another, which seems a part of our own very being, *could* ever wax cold?

> They never loved,
> Who dream that they loved *once.*

All who have ever known a really heartfelt and unselfish affection, must feel the truth of these words; and this thought, that our fellowship with one another is a fellowship in Christ, is the most exquisite comfort for those who have been on earth forsaken and

grieved in spirit, whom God has "called when they have been refused." "With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee," saith the Lord, thy Redeemer; and though the words refer in the first instance to Jerusalem, we may well use them each for himself, as we may use the song of thanksgiving which the same Prophet teaches us:—

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
My soul shall be joyful in my God;
For He hath clothed me with the garment of salvation,
He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness:
As a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments,
And as a bride adorneth herself with jewels.

He, the Shepherd—the Good Shepherd,—will Himself lead us to the living waters, beside the still pastures, where

Faithful eyes, that hunger for the light,
Feel all the glories of God's world in sight;
Eye hath not seen, ear heard, nor spirit known
What there the Lord will offer to His own:

Yet certain is it that no doubts or fears
Thither ascend, no partings and no tears.
There may I see the Highest face to face,
There may I know *thee* in thine own true place;
There, with changed lips, may I thy kindness bless,
And thine no longer will be answerless. *

For there the communion of saints will be a communion of heart with heart and mind with mind, such as the closest friendship here can hardly give. Then, too, earnest Christians who have differed while on earth, will see how their different forms of belief make up the fulness of faith. Here,

The truth one child of God can clearly see,
He seeks to make his brother feel in vain;
But all shall harmonize in heaven's full chord,—
So shall we be for ever with the Lord.

Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have a right to the

* P. S. Worsley. "Hades."

tree of life, and may enter in through the gate, into the city paved with gold. Every right use we make of our intrusted gold, is it not laid up for us in the streets of that city whose walls are salvation, and whose gates are praise? And the name of that city shall be, "The Lord is there." And we may comfort one another with these words, "So shall *we* ever be with the Lord, for there the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in that city. God's servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face." How *can* words express the exquisite happiness of feeling that our whole being, our whole will is moving in harmony with the will of God? nay, closer yet, in unison with His?

They sang as it were a new song, and no man could learn that song but those who are redeemed from the earth, for whom Jesus

Christ has made an atonement, who are now at one with God, their whole being yielding itself in praises to Him, like the harp touched by the hand of David, echoing in every tone the song of the Church militant, the hymn of the Church triumphant, past, present, and to come. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee!

And then sinking down, as it were, casting ourselves at His feet, acknowledging that all we can give is but that which He has first given us, we give Him thanks for that which is His own. "We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory. With angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy holy name, evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord most high! Alleluia, Amen. Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!"

Of that dear city the Scripture saith
There is life without any death,
And there is youth without any age,—
All kind of wealth, and no war to wage;
And there is rest such as none can assail,
And all good things that never can fail.
And there is peace without any strife,
All manner of pleasure, all fulness of life;
And there, without murkiness, perfect light,
Eternal day, and no coming night.
And there is summer full bright to see,
And never more winter in that country!
. . . . And happy being that knows no dread,
And in all things endless blissfulhed.
And for those secure ones that dwell therein,
The blessed necessity not to sin.
Eternal melody, angels' song,
And loving and thanking 'midst all the throng;
Accord and union, and yielding of meed
To every blest one for each good deed.

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